

VZCZCXRO3904
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHVJ #2971/01 3261746
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 221746Z NOV 06 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4884
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JCS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUFOAOA/USNIC SARAJEVO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SARAJEVO 002971

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

EUR FOR DICARLO, EUR/SCE FOR HOH, FOOKS AND STINCHCOMB, NSC
FOR BRAUN, OSD FOR FLORY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/01/2012

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [ODIP](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: U.S. ORGANIZED DAYTON COMMEMORATION EVENTS FOCUS
ON THE FUTURE

SARAJEVO 00002971 001.4 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Douglas L. McElhaney. Reason 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (U) SUMMARY: On November 21, the 11th anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, Embassy Sarajevo sponsored and/or hosted several events in and around Sarajevo. The highlight of the day was an event for more than 500 guests at the National Theater, which featured speeches by the Ambassador, Tri-Presidency Chairman Nebojsa Radmanovic, and a youth activist, as well as a performance by the Sarajevo Philharmonic Orchestra. Earlier, the Ambassador and chiefs of mission from the EU, UK, Germany, France, and Russia met jointly with the new members of the Bosnian Tri-Presidency and released a joint statement following the meeting calling on the newly elected Bosnian leaders to commit themselves to early reform. The U.S. message was clear -- the continued commitment of the United States to Bosnia; -- the need to move swiftly to implement key reforms, including police reform, constitutional reform and various economic reforms; -- the decision on Kosovo's status will represent a final resolution to the status of the successors to Yugoslavia; -- the future of the Republika Srpska must be within Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Embassy also sponsored two events highlighting the USG's commitment to Bosnia's future, including a career center for youth at Sarajevo University and a microlending network (both funded by USAID).
END SUMMARY.

Commemoration Event at the National Theater

12. (U) The highlight of the Embassy's Dayton commemoration was an event at the National Theater in Sarajevo, attended by a standing-room only crowd of political, economic, cultural and academic leaders. Newly elected Tri-Presidency Chairman Radmanovic was the first speaker and opened the evening with a speech that called on all the leaders of Bosnia to work together for a brighter future. Absent from the speech was any of the ugly, nationalist rhetoric that characterized the election campaign, and many of our interlocutors expressed pleasant surprise to us at the inclusive and optimistic tone of Radmanovic's speech. Following Radmanovic's speech, Ivana Kesic, a youth activist who participated in the U.S.-sponsored Benjamin Franklin Fellowship program, spoke about her experiences in forming a multi-ethnic youth organization aimed at educating young people about their civil rights and responsibilities. She also called on the leaders of Bosnia to fulfill their responsibilities and

promises to the citizens who elected them by focusing their time and energy on the country's future rather than its past.

¶3. (U) Ambassador McElhaney spoke last, and delivered a focused and powerful message to the political leaders of Bosnia that while much has been accomplished since Dayton, Bosnia is entering a new era of responsibility and independence. He emphasized the urgency to move forward right away with key reforms, including police reform and constitutional reform, and told the parties they must continue to work to consolidate the gains already achieved on defense reform. He pointedly told the Serbs that Republika Srpska's place was inside Bosnia and Herzegovina, and he told the political party leaders to begin to form a government. A major exception to the favorable reviews the U.S. message received came from members of the Party for BiH (SBiH). Bosniak Tri-Presidency member and SBiH President Haris Silajdzic did not attend the event, citing illness. The reaction from the breakaway HDZ-1990 was diplomatic, but HDZ-1990 President Bozo Ljubic did ask whether rumors circulating in Mostar that the U.S. wanted to keep HDZ-1990 out of government were true. We underscored that the USG was not guiding coalition talks and stressed that government formation was the responsibility of the political leaders.

¶4. (U) Press reaction to the event, and in particular to the U.S. message, was generally favorable and focused on three major points: -- first, that the U.S. continues to strongly support Bosnia's future; -- second, the decision on Kosovo will represent a final resolution to the status of the successors to Yugoslavia; -- and third, the future of the Republika Srpska must be within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Tri-Presidency Meeting with Dayton Signatories

¶5. (U) The day's events began with a meeting between the Ambassador and ambassadors from the signatory

SARAJEVO 00002971 002.4 OF 002

countries/institutions of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (The GFAP includes the EU, France, Germany, Russia, and the UK) and the newly-elected members of Bosnia's Tri-Presidency. The GFAP ambassadors stressed their continued commitment to Bosnia, including the country's aspirations for membership in Euro-Atlantic institutions, but emphasized that their relationship with Bosnia would change as the Office of the High Representative (OHR) closed. Responsibility for Bosnia's future would rest squarely in the hands of its new government, and the ambassadors urged the Tri-Presidency to move quickly to implement the reforms necessary to ensure all Bosnians a peaceful and prosperous future. After the meeting the GFAP ambassadors released a joint statement, which underscored these same points. (Note: Text of the statement has been e-mailed to EUR/SCE. End Note.)

¶6. (C) Nebojsa Radmanovic, the Serb member of the Tri-Presidency and current Tri-Presidency Chairman, and Zeljko Komsic, the Croat member of the Tri-Presidency response to the GFAP Ambassadors was consistent with the spirit of the day, stressing their gratitude for the international community's support for Bosnia over the past 11 years and underscoring their commitment to guiding Bosnia towards a Euro-Atlantic future. Perhaps predictably, Haris Silajdzic, the Bosniak member of the Tri-Presidency, struck a sour note. He criticized the international community for its failure to finish its work in Bosnia and argued the summer 2007 closure of OHR would jeopardize Bosnia's achievements since Dayton. The OHR, with full Bonn Powers, should remain in Bosnia in order to deal with Bosnia's "political blockages." The international community could no longer afford to take a "line of least resistance" approach to Bosnia, Silajdzic said.

Visit to USAID-Sponsored Programs

17. (U) Earlier in the day, the Ambassador attended the opening of a web-based Youth Career Portal sponsored by USAID. The center is the first comprehensive youth employment and entrepreneurship web resource in Bosnia and is based at Sarajevo University. With this project, USAID hopes to address the gap in resources and help create a favorable environment for the development and promotion of youth employment and entrepreneurship in Bosnia. The Ambassador also participated in a signing ceremony for USAID grants to four local micro-credit organizations. Each of the four organizations received two million USD for agricultural lending. Their programs are focused on giving loans to small agricultural producers, many of whom are minority returnees. Since the program's inception in 2004, it has lead to the creation of 1,247 new jobs and helped to sustain another 9,982 jobs throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both of these projects are central to helping to create incentives for young, educated Bosnians to stay and help build the domestic economy rather than seeking employment abroad, and to creating an environment for sustainable returns for people dislocated by the Bosnian war.

MCELHANEY